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GEOGRAPHICAL LITERATURE AND MAPS.

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BOOK NOTICES.

Deutschland und der Kongostaat. Ein Appell an die deutschen Handelskammern. By Ernst Vohsen. 72 pp., and Map. Dietrich Reimer (Ernst Vohsen), Berlin, 1908. M. 1.

A strong and able criticism of the trade policy of the former Congo State. The Berlin Congress of 1885 provided that all nations should enjoy complete freedom of trade in the entire Congo Basin. Monopolies and special privileges were expressly forbidden. But in spite of these provisions, the government of the Congo State declared all land not actually occupied by the natives to be government domain and monopolized in these large regions the rubber and ivory trade, extorted forced labour from the natives and made it impossible for any one not in the government service to carry on business. Later, wide areas were assigned to certain trading companies, in which the government was interested, exclusive privileges were given to them and free trade was absolutely a dead letter in the State. At the same time Germany was extending her railroad system in German East Africa, towards the west, and the export products of the eastern Congo region would naturally go to the Indian Ocean as the shortest route to the sea, but the Congo government was opposed to such a diversion of trade from its own routes to the Atlantic.

Mr. Vohsen has, in this brochure, fully set forth the facts as involving questions of great national importance in Germany, and appeals to the business interests of the country to bring their influence to bear upon the German government with a view to an official demand that the terms of the Congo Act be fulfilled. Now that the régime of the Congo State has been supplanted by that of the Belgian Colony of the Congo, it may be that the intentions of the Berlin Congress will, at last, be carried out.

Les Planètes et leur origine. Par Ch. André. ii and 285 pp., 94 Figures in the Text and 4 Plates. Gauthier-Villars, Paris, 1909. Frs. 8.

The author, Director of the Lyons Observatory, divides his book into three parts, devoting the first to the planets, the second to the satellites, and the third to the formation of the planetary system. His introductory chapter is a brief statement of the three fundamental laws of Kepler relating to the planetary orbits and the law, established by the mathematician Titius and the astronomer Bode, governing the distances of the planets from the sun. The book is extremely well and clearly written, is finely illustrated and will fully serve the purposes of a work of reference and a popular elucidation of the subject. In the chapter given to Mercury and Venus, Mr. André discusses and approves of the temperature investigations of Professor Poynting, the Birmingham astronomer, who assigned these mean temperatures: Mercury, 193° C.; Venus, 66° C.; and the Earth, 16° C. In his long chapter on Mars, he presents the views of Lowell and Pickering as to the existence of animal life on that planet, together with the objections to that hypo-